



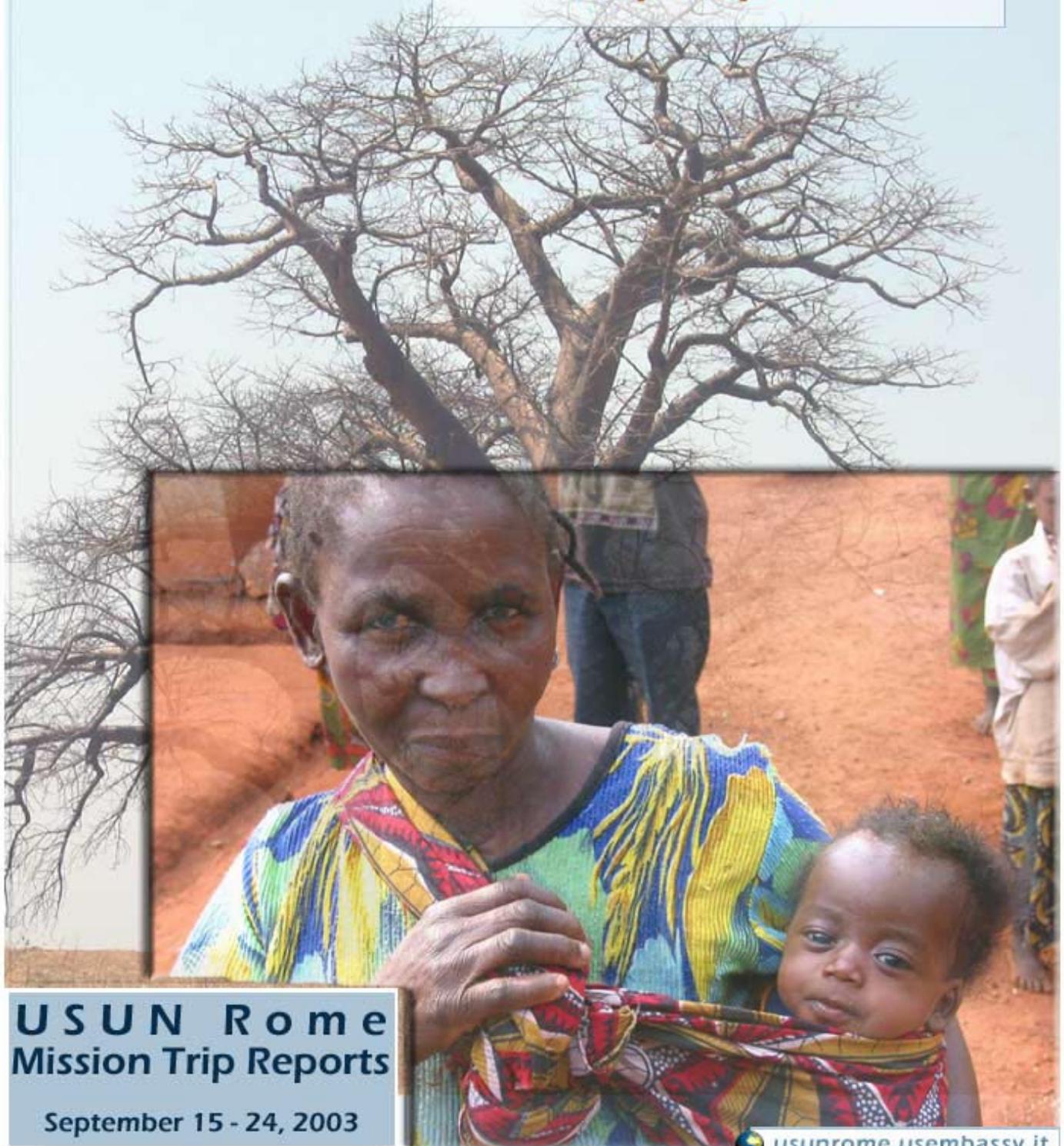
U.S. Mission to the UN Agencies in Rome



Fighting for Lives and Livelihoods:

ZAMBIA

Trip Report



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Fighting for Lives and Livelihoods: Zambia Trip Report

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Excerpt from the Zambia Daily Mail, Sept. 17:

Over the past year in Zambia, 18 percent of households experienced at least one death. The average age at death was 25.5 years of age. In half of all deaths, the individual was ill for more than three months.



Philip Lamade at the Meheba refugee camp, Northwestern Zambia

Philip Lamade, USAID Program Specialist for the US Mission to the UN Agencies for Food and Agriculture (USUN Mission Rome), traveled to Zambia from September 15th through 24th, 2003, where he reviewed World Food Program (WFP) activities in Zambia's northwestern and southern provinces, including refugee repatriation.

Background

The Republic of Zambia (formerly Northern Rhodesia from 1911 – to 1964) is a landlocked country in south-central Africa with an area of 290,586 square miles (752,614 square kilometers), which makes it slightly larger in area but with half the population of Texas. Bantu is the predominant language family of the estimated 10.3 million Zambians.

Although Zambia's population is small relative to its area, with a growth rate of more than 3 percent per annum, it is growing rapidly.

Zambia is highly urbanized, with well over half the population living in the four provinces along the rail line. Movement of people from rural areas into the towns was particularly marked after independence in 1964, and recent government efforts to reverse the flow have had only limited success.



The Republic of Zambia

Zambians are predominantly Christian. The Roman Catholic Church is the largest single denomination, but Anglicans, Baptists, Methodists, and others are well established. The growth of fundamentalist churches has been particularly noticeable since independence. The small Asian community is predominantly Hindu.

Zambia's Economy

Zambia had a disastrous economic performance during the 1990s with an average annual real GDP growth rate of about 0.6 percent, while sub-Saharan Africa averaged 2.4 percent. Zambia's economy is dependent on copper and cobalt production for over 60 percent of its total exports, and the fall in the average international copper price from \$1.19/lb in 1990 to \$0.70/lb in 2002 was particularly devastating.

Hyper inflation in the 1990s, combined with devaluation of the currency, eroded the purchasing power of household incomes and worsened Zambia's food security situation and poverty rate. Consequently, the country is now among the poorest in the world with a per capita income of \$337 in 2002, ranking it

153 of 173 countries on UNDP's 2002 Human Development Index. More than 60 percent of the population lives on the equivalent of \$1 or less per day.

Malnutrition and mortality have risen as a result of Zambia's economic decline, the HIV/AIDS pandemic, and poverty and food insecurity. In 1999, 59 percent of children under five years of age were stunted; 24 percent were underweight. Infant mortality rose from 90 per 1,000 live births in 1990 to 109 per 1,000 in 1999. About one million Zambians have died from HIV/AIDS. Currently, the infection rate is 28 percent in towns and 13 percent in rural areas.

Zambia and Biotechnology

In the summer of 2002, Zambia was in the midst of a food security crisis induced by erratic rains and other factors. Despite severe shortages that put nearly three million people at risk of serious hunger or worse, the Government of the Republic of Zambia (GRZ) rejected US-donated maize because it could not be certified as being free of genetically modified organisms.

By the fall, when the tragedy of the GRZ's decision became apparent, Ambassador Hall spoke out strongly, chastising GRZ officials for exacerbating the crisis.

One of the most vocal opponents of biotech food during the crisis had been the Jesuit Center for Theological Reflection (JCTR) in Lusaka, which praised the Government of Zambia's decision to reject US relief maize. Peter Henriot of the JCTR stated that it would be better for some Zambians to starve to death than risk destroying the future of Zambian agriculture. Even before and perhaps influencing the GRZ's decision, the JCTR stated at a town meeting that the United States was able to provide non-GMO maize despite the well-known US practice of intermixing non-GMO and GMO maize.

In January 2003, the US Mission to the Holy See hosted a seminar on sustainable agriculture

in the developing world in order to provide a clear sense of the potential for biotechnology for food and for more efficient agricultural development. Afterwards some African panelists noted that while Europe is by far Africa's largest agricultural export market, European governments are preventing economic advancement in Africa by threatening to block African biotech products. In November, the Vatican took a promising step and held a two-day study seminar to consider the science and ethical implications of biotechnology.

To this day Zambia remains the only country in the world to reject biotech food outright.

WFP Operations in Zambia

WFP has three kinds of operations in Zambia -- emergency, relief and recovery, and development -- all assisting different populations. WFP is distributing 48,000 metric tons of commodities to the most vulnerable Zambians through its one-year emergency operation ending in June 2004. Including orphans and vulnerable children, beneficiaries will peak at 480,000 in early 2004.

Zambia has been home to hundreds of thousands of refugees for many years. Until the April 2002 ceasefire agreement, the Angolan government and UNITA had been at war almost continuously since independence from Portugal in 1975. Over the years the GRZ generously provided arable land to refugees as part of a self-reliance strategy. Currently, Zambia is providing asylum to about 260,000 refugees, mainly from Angola, but also from the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Burundi, and Rwanda. WFP, through its protracted relief and recovery operation (PRRO) feeds 113,620 of them. Over time, it has moved from relief food distribution to targeted feeding as refugees have become more self-sufficient in food production.

The PRRO has been renewed through December 2005. Meanwhile, by a tripartite agreement among Zambia, Angola and the United Na-

tions High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), UNHCR began a voluntary repatriation program for Angolan refugees in July this year. About 20,000 refugees are expected to go home by the end of 2003, and another 40,000 next year. Beginning in January, WFP will assume responsibility for managing food distribution to remaining refugees, a responsibility currently undertaken by UNHCR.

Through its country program, a five-year development program ending in 2006, WFP provides a total of 65,000 tons of commodities to 595,000 beneficiaries. Core activities are food for assets, school feeding, supplementary feeding, and support to HIV/AIDS affected households.

Lusaka and Environs

Upon arrival in Lusaka, I met US Embassy Lusaka officials and the WFP Country Director.

The following day brought an eye-opening visit to the Bethany Community School, an orphans and vulnerable children center supported by WFP and its implementing partner, Project Concern International. Located in Roma, a suburb of Lusaka, Bethany was established in 1996 by a caring teacher with a vision. Today around 700 children attend grades 1 through 7 and receive protein-enriched porridge each day. In addition, more than 500 households receive rations; a skills center provides training in tailoring, shoemaking and repair; and the residential center houses 15 boys ranging in age from 7 to 16.

Considerable consternation and some laughter came from the day's foreign language lesson about all roads leading to Rome: *Tutte le strade portano a Roma*.



A Bethany classroom

In addition to classroom training, Bethany's skills training center in tailoring, shoe making and repair provides income-generating opportunities.



Bethany's master shoemaker

Later that day, representatives of the Biotechnology Outreach Society of Zambia demonstrated that biotechnology is a hot topic in Zambia. It was gratifying to hear Zambians speaking in positive terms about the benefits of biotechnology, particularly now that there is a growing interest among Zambian policy-makers to legislate an appropriate policy framework.

Northwestern Zambia

The first stop on a two-day visit to the Northwestern Province was a warehouse operated by WFP in Ndola. Orderly and run by knowledgeable staff, it contained mountains

of maize, beans and other commodities as well as 60,000 Humanitarian Daily Rations (HDRs) donated by the US Department of Defense for repatriating Angolan refugees.



Stacked in defense against hunger

The subsequent visit to a WFP supplementary feeding program for TB/HIV/AIDS patients at the Makulu Health Center, Kabwe, was more interesting, if less orderly. It was terrific to meet with the staff and beneficiaries and especially Julius.



Julius and his grandmother

Julius, a two-year old boy, and his grandmother were among those who had arrived for lunch. According to the Medecins Sans Frontiers doctor, Julius had been on the brink of starvation a few months earlier. Now that Julius' health has been restored, his grandmother takes care of him while his parents establish a new home in Angola.

Nearby, Solwezi is an important commercial center in the Northwestern Province where WFP, UNHCR and NGOs work collaboratively to sustain and ultimately repatriate refugees. The esprit de corps of the team is a joy to behold; their dedication is second to none.



Solwezi: WFP, UNHCR, and implementing partners

Lutheran World Federation (LWF) is WFP's principal implementing partner at the Meheba refugee camp. Along with other NGOs, LWF has developed impressive asset creation and preservation activities such as community gardens, fish farming, shoe repair, and sewing enterprises.



Fishponds built to raise carp

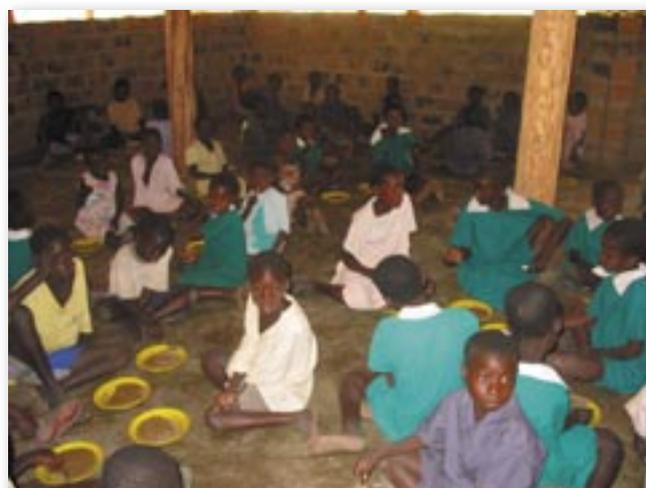
At the camp, we were fortunate in being able to stop and talk to some of the refugees. Almost unimaginably, some of the Angolan refugees have lived in the camp for 30 years. They were so happy to see and talk to us!



Long-time Angolan refugees

Southern Zambia

Noticeably hotter and more arid, WFP's projects in the Southern Province are equally impressive. The Bbakasa Basic School in Siavonga, founded in 1946 by Salvation Army missionaries, had closed and was only re-opened in 1982 after the area was cleared of land mines. Today, with the support of the GRZ's Ministry of Education and WFP, more than 250 children are enrolled through grade 4.



A full stomach allows these young minds also to be filled

WFP's school feeding program is a key activity of its development operations. Currently providing a daily ration of micronutrient rich porridge to more than 10,000 primary school children around the country, it encourages enrollment and attendance among all children, but with a particular emphasis on girls. In Siavonga alone, school feeding supports almost 3,000

children in 8 basic schools and 2 community schools.

Kafue is also an area famous for its revered African baobab trees, *Adansonia digitata*, which also provide an edible fruit. These trees are thought to be homes for ancestral spirits. When the Kariba



A lovely smile from the Bbaksa school cook

dam was being built in the 1960s, cuttings were taken from the oldest trees in the flood zone and replanted outside the danger zone. In this way their survival was assured.



Under the baobab tree is a traditional place of learning

Nearby, in Kafue District not far from these trees, the Food and Agricultural Organization (FAO) of the United Nations provides horticultural expertise and seeds to the Riverside Farm Institute, and outreach ministry of the Seventh-day Adventist Church, which manages a food-for-assets, conservation-farming program.

Trip Conclusions

WFP's work in Zambia is impressive. WFP works along the entire relief-to-development continuum by addressing the immediate nutritional needs of targeted vulnerable groups, building assets, and teaching people how to resist future food security shocks.

Beginning with a vulnerability assessment mapping exercise, WFP helps people who cannot obtain food because of their economic circumstances.

WFP is engaged with beneficiaries in the creation and preservation of assets such as natural resource conservation, skills upgrading (e.g., wood-working, sewing, shoe manufacture and repair, and roof tile manufacture), and aquaculture.

WFP Zambia's operations reach intended beneficiaries effectively and efficiently. Together with its implementing partners (e.g., CARE, World Vision International, Catholic Relief Services, Lutheran World Federation, Medicins Sans Frontiers, Jesuit Refugee Services, and Assistance to Aid Refugees), WFP also works hard to ensure that beneficiaries are not merely surviving but are engaged in self-sustaining livelihoods.

Despite notable success in helping Zambia avert widespread famine last year, WFP continues to wrestle with complex issues surrounding food insecurity. Although malnutrition remains a serious health problem, the battle against HIV/AIDS is yet to be won. WFP has an enviable record and remains well positioned to assist in sustaining the lives and livelihoods of the neediest sector of the Zambian population.